

THE DHS CONNECTION

Spring 2001

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
WWW.STATE.TN.US/HUMANSERV

Volume 3 No. 2

The DHS Connection Tennessee Department of Human Services

Natasha K. Metcalf
Commissioner


Michael Dedmon
Deputy Commissioner

Paul Ladd
Director of Communications

Lisa Gallon
Editor

Editorial Assistants for this issue:
Glenda Shearon, Renee Hunter,
David Holmes, Tamra Smith, Mike
Dedmon, Julia Jordan, Kitty Steede,
Adelle Wood, and Sharon Summers

Story ideas and articles may be submitted
to DHS Communications, 400 Deaderick
Street, Citizens Plaza, 15th Floor, Nashville,
Tennessee 37248 or E-mailed to DE01E09
(GroupWise) or Lgallon@mail.state.tn.us

 Department of Human Services Authorization
No. 345627, 5,500 copies, April 2001. This public doc-
ument was promulgated at a cost of \$.5 per copy.

Inside this Issue

From the Commissioner	1
Governor Unveils New Education Initiative	2
New Assistant Commissioner of Child Support	3
Tamra Smith Joins DDS	3
Department to Make Changes in E-mail System	3
Wanda Moore Says Goodbye	4
NADE Conference to be Held in Nashville	5
TRC Develops Relationship With Dell Computers	5



From The Commissioner

As law-makers deal with funding and passing a state budget, it becomes more apparent that serious tax reform is needed in Tennessee. Governor Sundquist is still fighting for a fair and responsible tax system in Tennessee, so that our priorities can be adequately funded. There are many reasons why Tennessee needs tax reform. But none is more important than education.

A quality education is important to virtually every aspect of life in Tennessee. Good schools mean our sons and daughters are learning what they need to know in order to become productive citizens. Good schools make it easier to attract business and industry, meaning we'll have good jobs for Tennesseans right here in Tennessee.


Without an adequate education, the children of Tennessee won't have the skills they need to succeed at a job, let alone in life. The Governor's Reading Initiative (more about this on page 2) is an integral component of the education package he has proposed to the General Assembly. He believes no child should leave the third grade without being able to read. Today's ill-educated child is tomorrow's ill-educated adult, an adult who has a greater chance of ending up on public assistance, instead of enjoying a bright future.

And for those who say government is spending too much, here are the facts: The Governor has worked hard to keep overall state spending down and taxes low. Our government workforce has remained at the same level for six

years. In fact, there are 135 fewer employees in the executive branch than when he took office in 1995. All this despite court and federal mandates to add hundreds of new positions. And discretionary spending, money that is available outside of government-ordered improvements and essential services of state government, things like health care and our current educational system, accounts for less than 3% of our total state budget.

Tennessee hasn't increased taxes to cover the cost of general government in a quarter-century, although during that time, the population we serve has grown by more than two million. We're spending the same amount of money, yet we are trying to serve a lot more people. To think that we can continue to meet the needs of our growing state without addressing our outdated tax structure is like thinking that the price of cars or hamburgers will be the same 25 years from now.

The Governor's tax reform plans are not some scheme to increase the tax burden on Tennesseans. It's a way to make the tax system more equitable and have everyone pay their fair share. It's a way to put in place an ongoing revenue system that keeps up with the state's population growth and grows with the economy.

Back in the 1920s, Governor Austin Peay proposed changes in the state's tax system to bring it into the 20th Century. 80 years later, Governor Sundquist is proposing reforms that will help bring our state's financial structure into the new millennium, and put Tennessee on a sound fiscal footing for decades to come. 

Natasha K. Metcalf

The Governor's **READING** Initiative



Governor Sundquist Unveils Initiative to Improve Education in Tennessee

Governor Don Sundquist spent the past few months at schools all across Tennessee, observing innovative reading programs, listening to teachers talk about what works and ways we can help them do a better job.



filed legislation to implement the "Governor's Reading Initiative." Tennessee's children have always been Governor Sundquist's top priority. This year, his number one goal is to make sure no child leaves the third grade in Tennessee unable to read.

The Governor's Reading Initiative

The Governor proposes, in the next five years, preschool will be available to all four-year-olds, starting with those most at risk. He believes if an investment is made in our teachers, in our classrooms, in our children, education in Tennessee will drastically improve.

Preschool development is an important first step to learning to read. Basic motor, social, and cognitive skills must be developed before a child is prepared to start school. While many children are taught these skills at home, many are not. Consequently, they start school already behind their peers.

Other than parents, teachers are the most important influence in a child's life. We need to give our teachers the tools they need to be their best. The Governor's plan helps recruit the best teachers possible, enhances teacher training and offers incentives to keep our best teachers in the classrooms.

Because of the increasing short supply of teachers, more of the best and brightest students need to be recruited into the teaching profession. Full scholarships for juniors and seniors who want to be teachers is one of the Governor's suggestions under this initiative.

The Governor's Reading Initiative costs less than \$100 million in year one and less than \$50 million in new money in each of the next four years.



For about one percent of our total state funds, it is almost guaranteed that we will see:


- Better reading scores,
- Higher passing rates on our Gateway tests for high school seniors,
- More students earning diplomas,
- Less remediation at our institutes of higher learning
- And more teachers coming into and staying in our classrooms

The Challenge

- In 2000, 62% percent of 5th graders and 63% of 8th graders tested below proficient reading on last year's Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP).
- The state received a "C" in reading achievement in grades K-5 and grades 6-8 on the 2000 statewide report card.
- Tennessee is the only southeastern state without a state-funded reading initiative
- One-third of Tennessee's 9th graders did not pass the Competency Test on the first attempt

Because test scores are showing that Tennessee's children can't read as well as they should, Governor Sundquist has

The Governor's plan expects dramatic and quantifiable improvements in student performance within five years. Thanks to the investment Tennessee has made in education in the past, the assessment system, one of the best in the country, provides a wealth of data. It will provide Tennesseans in very certain terms whether the investments we make are producing the results we expect. Test scores such as TCAP and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), should increase within the next five years, particularly in reading competency.

Our children are depending on our investment today for their future. In the words of Governor Sundquist, "If they can't read, they can't spell future." 



DHS' New Assistant Commissioner

Mike Adams has joined DHS as the new Assistant Commissioner for Child Support Services. He brings a wealth of experience to the department, having held similar positions in North Carolina.


Adams was with the Child Support Enforcement office of the North Carolina Department of Human Resources from 1981 to 1998, serving as Director for the last eight of those years. He also has child support services experience in the private sector; he was most recently Director of Government Relations for Corrvantis, which provides child support services to government.

"Mike's experience and expertise will be a big help to our department. He has a lot of good ideas and we're looking forward to positive changes in the area of child support services," said Commissioner Natasha K. Metcalf.

"I am excited about being here and having the opportunity to do a job for

the second time," Adams told the DHS Connection. "I think it provides an advantage of having the experience of what works, what doesn't, and what's important."

Adams sees his duties as simple. "It's all about getting money for the support of children, and I want us to be very outcome-focused around that goal. Whatever decisions we make at any level-we need to ask, 'How is it going to help ensure that a child is going to get the support they need and deserve?' To that end, we'll be looking to see that our performance increases the number of cases for child support orders, and measuring and repeating and being accountable to our customers."

Adams graduated from Wake Forest University with a degree in History and Liberal Arts. 

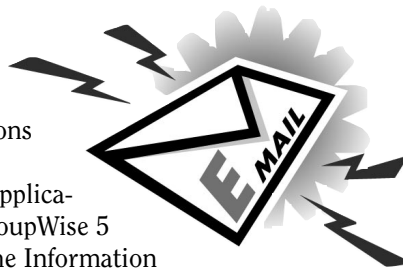
Department's E-Mail System To Make Change By Summer

Most of us have grown accustomed to instant communication by using electronic mail, or e-mail. While our mode of communications has been enhanced, there is a level of frustration because the department uses a variety of e-mail applications. Office Vision, GroupWise 4 (GW 4), and GroupWise 5 (GW 5) are currently used, however the goal of the Information Systems staff is to move all staff to a common application.

"We are currently in the process of upgrading some of the PC's and printers used by DHS staff resulting from the hardware replacement plan. As GW 4 users receive new hardware, they will be upgraded to GW 5 e-mail," Glenda Shearon, Director of Information Systems said. "The new hardware will be installed during the spring and summer of 2001. GW4 will not be available at the end of the hardware replacement installation."

Although it will not be possible to totally eliminate Office Vision e-mail at this time, many TELEX terminals will be replaced with thin clients or PC's allowing staff to have GroupWise e-mail. This transition will also occur during the spring/summer of 2001. While the goal is to discontinue using Office Vision, it will be necessary for some staff to continue using TELEX terminals in order to have e-mail access through Office Vision.

Currently GroupWise and Office Vision users cannot send e-mail to each other. However, effective June 30, 2001 the Information Systems staff will transition those staff and contractors to different hardware and GroupWise so that this will no longer



SMITH JOINS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES




Tamra L. Smith has been named

Director of the Disability Determination Services section of the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Smith is a former Chancellor of the 17th Judicial District for Bedford, Lincoln, Marshall and Moore counties.

The Disability Determination Services (DDS) section processes Social Security disability insurance claims and applications for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. DDS is fully funded by the Social Security Administration.

Prior to her appointment as Chancellor, Smith was an attorney in private practice, where she often worked with Social Security and disability clients. She was previously Director of Juvenile Court Services in Bedford County.

"Tamra's experience as a lawyer and judge will be a big plus to our Disability Determination Services unit," said Carl Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Rehabilitation. "She has a unique understanding of the Social Security disability processes, which will be invaluable to the Disability Determination Services section."


Smith is a 1989 graduate of the Nashville School of Law, and also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Middle Tennessee State University and an Associate Degree in the Arts from Motlow State Community College. She and her husband, Jeffrey, live in Shelbyville. Smith will also continue to serve on the teaching staff of The Center for Family Development. 

Shirley Jean May

REHABILITATION SERVICES

CASE OF THE YEAR



The Division of Rehabilitation Services named Shirley Jean May as Rehabilitation Services' Case of the Year for 2000. Kingsport counselor, Gail Evans assisted May with developing a rehabilitation plan and arranged for her to enter college. She was challenged with car problems, sick children and limited income. In spite of her challenges, however; she maintained her grades and later earned a bachelor's degree from Tusculum College. Upon graduation, May was hired as a home-bound teacher in Hawkins County. 


Department's E-Mail...cont.

be a barrier. Family Assistance and Adult Protective Services staff use Office Vision to access Shared Base Documents. All documents have been converted to the GroupWise Library and as staff are trained to use the GroupWise Library and receive new equipment if needed, the Office Vision accounts will be phased out.

As we transition more of our staff to GroupWise 5, we want to share some helpful tips. Below are a few GW5 tips that might be helpful to know about if you are not already using them:

- Control + F or the magnifying glass on the toolbar will help you locate e-mails by category that are in your mailbox. You can use this to look for mail by author, subject,

text, sender or cc by entering information in the tabs located on the find screen. Left click the mouse to select criteria and type information in the boxes. Press enter and GroupWise will "find" all e-mails according to the criteria you identify and group those in a box for your selection.

- If you have an attachment you would like to print without the attachment information at the top, right click on the attachment and select open. The attachment will open in the software it was created in (Word, Excel, etc.) Then, you can print it as a document rather than an e-mail; You can also make changes to the document and save it in one of your directories. 

**For more information
call the help desk at
615-313-5484**

DHS TIDBITS...

★ Other New Faces

Ortaeina Acidera is the Department's new Director of Program Integrity. Prior to coming to DHS she was employed by the Board of Regents. She also has several years of auditing experience with the Comptroller's State Audit section.


Lee Anne Bruce is the new Deputy General Counsel. Lee Anne was previously with the law firm of London & Amburn in Knoxville. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law.

Cheryl Booker is the new Administrative Assistant for the Communications Office. Cheryl was previously with the Disability Determination Services section.

★ Wanda Moore Says Goodbye




(Photo courtesy of Julia Jordan)

Wanda Moore, Director of Families First Services, retired effective January 31. Wanda was a career DHS employee who made outstanding contributions to the clients of this agency. She contributed significantly to the design and implementation of the welfare reform initiative that became Families First. (Wanda even thought of the name.) When Governor Sundquist announced Families First, Wanda was one of the few DHS employees asked to stand and be recognized by a joint session of the Tennessee General Assembly. 



Conference will be held in Nashville

The Tennessee Association of Disability Examiners and the Baton Rouge Association of Disability Examiners will be co-hosting the National Association of Disability Examiners (NADE) Bi-Regional Training Conference in Nashville on May 15-18, 2001 at the Sheraton Nashville Downtown Hotel. "Participants will include physicians, psychologists, lawyers, and disability professionals involved in the Social Security Administration's Disability Programs. Sue Heflin, the national president of NADE will also attend this year's conference," said Sharon Summers, President of the NADE Southeast Region. For more information about the NADE visit the web site at www.nade.org or contact Charles Schimmels at 1-800-877-9977, ext. 138. 

30 Year Veterans



The Tennessee Rehabilitation Center hosted a luncheon of Vocational Rehabilitation staff who has 30 or more years of service. Pictured from left to right: *Fred Verble* (30), *Brenda Hampton* (30), *Bobby Gregory* (35), *Carolyn Penn* (35), *Roger Black* (30), *Wayne Eldridge* (35), *Kitty Steede* (40), *Roy Garvin* (30) and *Leroy Griffith* (30). Assistant Commissioner Carl Brown was presented with a 35 years of service plaque by Commissioner Metcalf.


TRC Develops Partnership with Dell

Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) Electronic Instructor, Tom Hafstad, and Occupational Skills Training

Supervisor, Gary Millsaps, recently met with Dell Computer Representatives to discuss employment opportunities for



L to R: Tom Hafstad, Gary Millsaps, and Dell Representatives Shane Parker and Linda Parrish

TRC electronics graduates. Sharling Grummon, Staffing Advisor, and Roshunda Tall, Senior Project Analyst, with Dell toured TRC in January and demonstrated a great interest in the Center's Electronics Training Program providing qualified graduates for employment with Dell. Of particular interest to Dell is the center's new computer repair component of the Electronics Training Program. Continued discussions with Dell will open doors for TRC graduates in employment positions of computer technicians, assemblers, and customer service representatives. 

Correction:

Andrew Rosenfield was inadvertently left out of the story in the Winter issue of the DHS Connection concerning the National Eligibility Workers Association (NEW). Rosenfield was a recipient of the Tim Gard Scholarship, which granted him free admission to the 25th Annual Training Conference that was held in Norfolk, VA last fall. The editor regrets this omission.

Helpful web sites to visit



Human Services

www.state.tn.us/humanserv



The Governor's Reading Initiative

www.state.tn.us/governor/reading/index.html



DHS Credit Union

www.dhscu.org

Save the date:

DHS Annual Child Support Enforcement Conference

November 26-28, 2001

River Terrace Resort & Convention Center

Gatlinburg, TN

For more information: Gladys Carr (615) 313-4880, Gcarr@mail.state.tn.us
